



DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

SITE PLAN INFORMATION

What is a Site Plan?

A Site Plan is a drawing (drawn accurately to scale) that shows existing conditions and details of proposed development on a site, and how it meets applicable development ordinance requirements.

What type of work requires a Site Plan? (UDO Section 3.7.1A)

All proposed development (defined as any human caused change to improved or unimproved real estate that requires a permit or governmental approval) is subject to the site plan review process to ensure its compliance with the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), with the following exceptions:

- Single-family and two-family residential development on single lots;
- Fences and landscaping that are not associated with a requirement in the UDO; and
- Changes that are solely limited to the interior of an existing building, unless there will also be a change of use for the property.*

***Note:** A change in the category of use of a property requires a site plan when the existing site does not meet the standards for parking, landscaping, or buffers for the proposed use.

What type of Site Plan does my project need?

Site Plans are classified into the following types based on the scope of work:

1. **Architectural Review** (UDO Section 3.24) – requests to change only the building elevation (facade design) with no site changes, including no change to impervious surfacing.
2. **Simplified Site Plans** (UDO Section 3.7.1)
 - a. **Administrative Site Plans** – requests no increase in impervious surfaces, new land disturbance, building area, or any changes that would require review by any agency or department except Planning.
 - b. **Small Simplified Site Plans** – requests including a maximum of 1,000 square feet of new building; a maximum of 1 acre of land disturbance; a maximum of 5% increase in parking; minor amendments to an approved site plan; no change in Stormwater Impact Analysis (SIA); no Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA); no modifications to the UDO; and no uses that require a special use permit.
 - c. **Large Simplified Site Plans**– requests including more than 1,000 square feet but less than 25,000 square feet of new building; more than 1 acre of land disturbance; or modifications of UDO standards that require Planning Director or designee approval.
3. **Minor Site Plans** (UDO Section 3.7.1) – requests including more than 25,000 square feet of new building; more than 25 new residential units; require a TIA; request modifications of UDO standards that require Development Review Board approval; or require a minor special use permit.
4. **Major Site Plans** (UDO Section 3.7.1) - request modifications of UDO standards that require governing board approval; require a major special use permit (3.9 and 3.8.8); or are located in a Watershed Protection Overlay Critical Area, with impervious surface that exceeds the maximum permitted by the Low Density Option under Sec. 8.7, Watershed Protection Overlay Standards.

- 5. Amendments** (UDO Section 3.7.14) – requests to modify approved site plans, including minor changes such as those resulting from field conditions or result in equal or better performance; or significant changes, as determined by the Planning Director or designee. Site plan amendments are classified by scope according to the descriptions above. The fee and review structure for an amendment will be based on the type of site plan it is classified as, regardless of its amendment function. For example, a modest change to an approved site plan may be equivalent to a small simplified site plan, and therefore the fee and the review would be equivalent, but the application approval would be for an amendment. In some cases a brand new site plan submittal may be required when the proposed amendment results in a proposal that is significantly different from the original. Amendments must clearly identify the change from the approved site plan.

What is required for a Site Plan submittal?

There are four components that make up the site plan submittal: the application, the fee, the set of drawings, and additional information, such as a Stormwater Impact Analysis (SIA), that may also be required. Refer to the checklist for each type of site plan for the complete list of required information for your type of project. The fee for each level of site plan is listed in the [fee schedule](#), as well as on the applications and checklists for each site plan type.

How do I submit a Site Plan application?

Submittals for Simplified Small, Simplified Large, Minor and Major Site Plans are made by appointment. Contact the Planning Department at (919) 560-4137 to schedule your submittal appointment. Appointments are available weekly and may be made up to one week in advance, but no later than 48 hours in advance.

Submittals for Architectural Reviews, Administrative Site Plans, and re-reviews of all site plan types are accepted any day without appointment. These submittals may be made directly at the Planning Department Customer Service Center.

Who can prepare a Site Plan?

The information required on a site plan must be sealed by a design professional, such as a civil engineer, architect, or landscape architect. If desired, an applicant or agent may submit the site plan as the liaison between the City and County reviewing agencies, the design professionals and the property owner.

Process Overview

- 1. Pre-submittal Meetings:** The first step of the site plan process is to decide what site changes will be proposed and to confirm with the Planning Staff what level of site plan application will be appropriate. During this time applicants should request and attend a pre-submittal meeting with staff. The Planning Department requires a pre-submittal meeting for all Major Site Plans, Minor Site Plans with Minor Special Use Permits, and all site plans with development plans as part of their zoning. A pre-submittal meeting is recommended for all other site plan applications. For scheduling, please complete the [request form](#).
- 2. Site Plan Submittal and Review:** When all components of the site plan application are complete, applicants should make an appointment to submit the site plan package. Once submitted and accepted, the site plan is entered into the Land Development Office (LDO) project tracking software. Plans are distributed weekly to multiple agencies for their review on the Monday after the submittal is accepted. The reviewing agencies are afforded an initial review cycle as follows:

Architectural Review and Administrative Site: one week

Simplified Small Site Plans:	two weeks
Simplified Large, Minor and Major Site Plans:	three weeks

3. **Tracking Site Plan Status:** Owners and applicants can track the progress of the review cycle and check comments using the online LDO. On the Wednesdays after the completion of the review cycle, applications can gather comments from reviewers using the LDO and begin modifying the site plan and accompanying information to address the comments. Please be aware that each review agency enters its comments into the system individually, and there may be updates to the comments the first few days that they are available.

Visit LDO at: http://ldo.durhamnc.gov/durham/ldo_web/ldo_main.aspx?fn=LR_ABOUT&sid

When you click on the link above, on the upper left side, click on "Login". The screen that comes up requires a "Contractor ID" and a "PIN". For both, use "0000" (four zeroes). Once you are logged in, select "**Plans**" from the middle left side of the screen. On the next screen, in the box for "Case Numbers", type the case number. The case overview screen will show some details of the case, including buttons at the bottom to view the comments.

4. **Re-Submittal Process:** Once staff has reviewed the site plan and made comments, applicants have 90 days to respond to the comments by re-submitting a complete set of corrected drawing, any additional information, and written responses to all comments. A complete set of the re-submittal package, including written responses, is required for each reviewer with outstanding comments. If an applicant wishes to discuss comments with one or more reviewers, a resubmittal meeting may be requested. To schedule a re-submittal meeting please complete the [request form](#).

Once submitted and accepted, the site plan is entered into the re-review cycle. Re-review cycles for Architectural Review and Administrative Site Plans are one week, while all other plan types (Simplified Small and Large, Minor and Major) follow a two-week re-review cycle. If all comments are not addressed by the completion of the second review (first re-review) the re-submittals and re-reviews continue until the site plan can demonstrate compliance with all applicable development ordinances. Any required review after the second review (first re-review) will incur a re-review fee, as described in the in the [fee schedule](#).

5. **Site Plan Approval:** Most Architectural Review, Administrative, Simplified Small, and Simplified Large Site Plans are eligible for administrative approval and do not require approval from the Development Review Board (DRB) or the governing bodies. Once staff has verified that all comments have been addressed, the plans may be stamped and signed approved and distributed to the applicant and other required departments.

Minor Site Plans must be approved by the DRB and are generally scheduled for a DRB meeting when comments have been verified as addressed. Applicants are expected to attend the meeting to present their case and answer any questions from the board.

Major Site Plans must have a recommendation from the DRB before being placed on the agenda for the appropriate governing body (City Council or County Board of Commissioners) to take action.

What are the next steps after my site plan is approved?

After receiving approval for the site plan, the next step for most development projects will be review and approval of the Construction Documents through the Public Works Department and permits through the Inspections Department.